

use of chemical fertilizers and neglect of organic manures may affect the soil health including the deficiency of secondary and micro nutrients and may affect the physico-chemical and biological properties of the soil. As such, there are no accounts of large scale degradation of soil health and crop productivity in the country due to use of chemical fertilizers.

(c) and (d) Government of India is implementing various Watershed Development Programmes, namely, (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA), (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soils (RAS), (iv) Watershed Development Projects for Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP), (vii) Integrated Wasteland Development Project (IWDP), (viii) Watershed Development Fund (WDF) and (ix) Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) for development of degraded lands including barren lands in the country. Under these programmes, since inception upto Tenth Five Year Plan, an area of about 50.83 million ha. of degraded lands have been developed. Parts of such developed lands are also brought under cultivation to maintain balance in different types of land uses apart from increasing productivity of the degraded lands.

To overcome the ill-effects of imbalanced use of chemical fertilizers, the Government is promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), which advocates soil test based judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with organic manures and bio-fertilizers. Government is also promoting organic farming by advocating use of organic sources of nutrients like farm yard manure, compost, green manure; vermi compost bio-fertilizers, etc. for improving the soil health and its fertility.

Production and consumption of pulses

3216. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of production and consumption of pulses in the country during the year;

(b) whether the domestic production is sufficient to meet the requirements; and

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RAJYA SABHA

(c) if not, how Government propose to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) As per the 3rd Advance Estimates released on 4th April, 2007, production of pulses during 2006-07 stands at 14.10 million tonnes. Based on the Demand Projections for the Tenth Five Year Plan prepared by a working group of the Planning Commission using normative approach, total consumption of pulses during the year 2006-07 is likely to be 17.71 million tonnes.

(b) and (c) To augment domestic availability, the Government has permitted import of pulses at zero duty. Also, a ban was imposed on export of pulses (except kabuli channa) with effect from June 22, 2006.

In order to increase the production of pulses, a Centrally sponsored "Integrated Scheme on Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize" (ISOPOM) is in place from 01.04.2004. Under the scheme, financial assistances are provided for purchase of breeder seeds, production of foundation seeds, production and distribution of certified seeds, distribution of seed minikits, infrastructure development, block demonstrations on improved technology, integrated pest management and distribution of sprinkler sets.

Weather based insurance

3217. SHRI C.RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to offer weather based crop insurance scheme for farmers;

(b) if so, whether the scheme would be operated on an actuarial basis with an element of subsidy;

(c) if so, what would be the component of the subsidy;

(d) in which States the scheme would be implemented and how many small farmers are expected to be covered;

(e) whether it would also cover rainfed farm areas like Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa; and